

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AID-20 IO-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 OMB-01 EUR-25 AF-10 DPW-01 RSR-01 /151 W

----- 000975

P R 080350 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1318

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 8018

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SAIGON INFO TANGIER 7 MAY 73 REPEATED
FOR YOU

QUOTE:

CAN THO 0290

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, MARR, MOPS, CA, CB, HU, ID, PL, VS

SUBJECT: SITREP FOR MAY 7, 1973

1. SUMMARY: HIGH GOVERNMENT CASUALTIES FOR THE WEEK OF APRIL 29
MAY 5 REFLECT THE INTENSIFIED FIGHTING IN MR IV. A PHNOM PENH
BOUND CONVOY CROSSED THE BORDER SAFELY. AN ICCS HELICOPTER
RECEIVED GROUND FIRE NEAR VI THANH. END SUMMARY.

2. SECURITY SITUATION: (A) MR IV REPORTED 54 INCIDENTS ON SUNDAY,
MAY 6, DOWN SOMEWHAT FROM THE INTENSE FIGHTING AT THE END OF THE
WEEK. FRIENDLY CASUALTIES FOR THE WEEKEND WERE 57 KILLED, 241
WOUNDED, AND SIX MISSING. THE OPPOSITION REPORTEDLY LOST 97 KILLED
AND FIVE CAPTURED.

(B) GOVERNMENT CASUALTIES FOR THE WEEK OF APRIL 29- MAY 5 WERE THE
HIGHEST SINCE THE FIRST WEEK OF THE CEASEFIRE. RVNAF LOST
281 DEAD AND 921 WOUNDED. COMMUNIST CASUALTIES, ON THE OTHER HAND,
WERE LOW: 353 KILLED. EXCEPT FOR THE PREVIOUS WEEK AND THE LAST
WEEK OF MARCH, THIS FIGURE REPRESENTS THE LOWEST NUMBER OF
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COMMUNIST CASUALTIES SINCE THE JANUARY CEASEFIRE.

(C) THE RISING GOVERNMENT CASUALTIES REFLECT THE CRESCENDO OF VIOLENCE IN THE DELTA THIS WEEK. THERE WERE NO DRAMATIC, LARGE SCALE BATTLES BUT A SERIES OF COMMUNIST INITIATED GROUND ASSAULTS, ABF'S, AND HARASSMENTS TOOK A BLOODY TOLL OF GOVERNMENT FORCES AND PERMITTED THE COMMUNISTS TO WITHDRAW WITH RELATIVELY LIGHT LOSSES.

THESE ATTACKS WERE SPREAD ACROSS THE DELTA WITH THE HEAVIEST OCCURRING

IN CHUONG THIEN, DINH TUONG, AND SOUTHERN PHONG DINH AND BA XUYEN PROVINCES.

(D) A TEN-SHIP MEKONG RIVER CONVOY CARRYING AMMUNITION, POL, AND SUPPLIES TO PHNOM PENH CROSSED THE CAMBODIAN FRONTIER AT 1110 HOURS

MAY 6 WITHOUT INCIDENT. THE CONVOY WAS ESCORTED BY A VNN FLOTILLA OF 35 BOATS WHICH TURNED BACK AT THE BORDER. (CAN THO 0286)

(E) THE CAMBODIAN LIAISON OFFICER AT THE 44 TH SPECIAL TACTICAL ZONE'S HEADQUARTERS IN CHI LANG CALLED MAY 6 TO REPORT THAT THE NVA/KI LAUNCHED ATTACKS AGAINST THREE POSITIONS OF THE 15 TH FANK BRIGADE AROUND PHNOM DEN MOUNTAIN. THE ATTACKS CONTINUED THROUGHOUT THE DAY AND HAD CAUSED AT LEAST ONE FANK KIA AND TEN WIA.

3. ICCS: (A) ON THE MORNING OF MAY 6, AN ICCS COURIER HELICOPTER CARRYING 7 COMMISSION PERSONNEL AND THREE CREW MEMBERS, RECEIVED GROUND FIRE NEAR VI THANH, CHUONG THIEN PROVINCE. THE HELICOPTER WAS ABOUT TWO MINUTES FROM TOWN AND HAD DESCENDED FROM 3000 TO 700

FEET WHEN IT REPORTEDLY RECEIVED TWO BURSTS OF "POSSIBLY AK-47" FIRE WHICH PASSED ASTERN THE AIRCRAFT. THE HELICOPTER LANDED SAFELY AT VI THANH. REGION VII ICCS IS SCHEDULED TO INTERVIEW THE CREW TODAY AND WILL LODGE A PROTEST WITH ICCS SAIGON.(CAN THO 0288)

(B) THE CHIEF CANADIAN ICCS DELEGATE SPECULATED THAT COMMUNIST ICCS MEMBERS MIGHT TRY TO RELATE THE INCIDENT TO ARVN'S REPORTED USE APRIL 26 OF AN ICCS-MARKED HELICOPTER IN COMBAT OPERATIONS (CAN THO 0252). THAT HELICOPTER WAS BASED IN VI THANH.

4. VC ACTIVITIES: THE VICE CONSUL IN BA XUYEN HAS OBTAINED MORE DETAILS ON THE BLOODY VC ATTACK ON THE GIA HOA VILLAGE SEAT MAY 3 (CAN THO 0277 AND 0284). THE DISTRICT CHIEF, HAVING RECEIVED INTELLIGENCE THAT AN ATTACK WAS IMMINENT, REINFORCED THE VILLAGE MILITARY UNITS WITH A CRACK RF PLATOON. DESPITE THESE PRECAUTIONS, CONFIDENTIAL

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ALL THE DEFENDERS WERE ASLEEP WHEN THE ATTACK CAME IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS. ALMOST ALL THE CASUALTIES WERE MILITARY PERSONNEL OR THEIR DEPENDENTS. PERHAPS BECAUSE OF THE UNCERTAIN SECURITY

SITUATION, NO CIVILIAN HOMES WERE LOCATED IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF THE VILLAGE OFFICE. A FULL REPORT FOLLOWS BY SEPARATE TELEGRAM.

5. SELECTED PROVINCE COMMENT: A VICE CONSUL FROM RACH GIA NOTES THAT SECURITY IN KIEN GIANG HAS INCREASED IN SOME DISTRICTS AND DECLINED IN OTHERS SINCE JANUARY 28. RACH GIA CITY AND SURROUNDING DISTRICTS HAVE SEEN LITTLE MILITARY ACTIVITY. FARMERS ARE PREPARING TO PLANT RICE IN UP TO 6000 HECTARES OF LAND WHICH HAS LAIN FALLOW FOR SEVERAL YEARS. BUT SECURITY HAS DETERIORATED IN THE SOUTHERN DISTRICTS OF THE PROVINCE, ESPECIALLY KIEN BINH. AN INFORMAL

TRUCE EXISTS BETWEEN LOCAL RF AND PF UNITS AND TWO NEWLY INFILTRATED VC/ NVA MAIN FORCE BATTALIONS. PERHAPS BECAUSE OF THIS STALEMATE, VC CADRE AND GUERRILLAS ARE BOLDER AND HAVE INCREASED THEIR TAX COLLECTING, RECRUITING, PROPAGANDIZING, AND HARASSMENT OF PF OUTPOSTS.

WISNER UNQUOTE

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